

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 1-21 and 24 without disclaimer or prejudice, add new claims 25-27, and amend the remaining claims as follows

1-21 (Cancelled)

22. (Previously Amended) A process for increasing fire resistance of a combustible material comprising:

contacting a porous combustible material with a soluble silicate solution under conditions so as to impregnate pores within the combustible material with said silicate solution;

heat treating said impregnated combustible material at an elevated temperature to dehydrate said silicate solution to form a soluble silicate substance within the pores of said combustible material and further heat treating said soluble silicate within said pores to cause said soluble silicate to become less soluble in water.

23. (Currently Amended) A process for imparting fire retardancy to combustible materials comprising:

impregnating said combustible materials with a soluble silicate solution; ;

polymerizing the soluble silicate within said solution to form a water insoluble silicate based substance;

said polymerizing including the step of dehydrating said silicate solution and heat treating the resulting silicate to form said water insoluble silicate based substance.

24. (Cancelled)

25. (New) A process of imparting fire retardant properties to wood products comprising applying and infusing a sodium silicate solution into voids in said wood product and hardening the sodium silicate solution into glass.

26. (New) The process of claim 25, including the step of separating the wood fibers in the wood product from one another by the hardened sodium silicate.

27. (New) The process of claim 25, including the step of applying the sodium silicate solution is applied to the wood by industrial wood-preserving operations.